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ABSTRACT

Based on their geographical location and the relative size of their camp operation, 20 resident camps were asked to conduct 30 telephone interviews in their local community with parents of children who: still attended the camp, had previously attended the camp but did not return for the summer of 1973, or had never attended the camp. Responses were received from 16 camps and interviews were completed with 275 families. These parents were asked about their: reasons for sending or not sending their children to resident camp; preferences for a day camp or a resident camp; family leisure time and vacation patterns; summer activities; membership in synagogues, temples, and Jewish communal organizations; and socioeconomic background. Data were also obtained on family mobility and birth rate of the Jewish population. Some findings were: no significant relationship was found between a family's use of resident camp services and the extent to which they vacationed together; families with children attending resident camps in 1973 most frequently cited personal and social development of the child as the most important reasons for selecting this type of camp experience; and children were attending resident camps for shorter registration periods than children attending day camps. (NQ)

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The Impact of Family Leisure Time Patterns on Jewish Resident Camping

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APRIL 1975

INTRODUCTION

With the development of a full-time Camping Service, JWB for the first time in many years, is now prepared to give breadth and scope to camping services that have not been available for the last few years. In addition to individual consultations, program materials, camping statistics, and conferences and institutes, some new areas of service are beginning to emerge. The three major areas are: 1) the development of Jewish camp program materials; 2) the education of communities to the value of a Jewish communal camping service and 3) the use of research and study to help camp administrators and community planners to look ahead as they attempt to provide good Jewish communal camping services in a changing society.

This approach is in keeping with and implementing the April 1972 JWB Camp Commission report whose recommendations include among many others:

A. "JWB should broaden and intensify its services to camps and serve as an advocate for Jewish camping. To do this the Commission recommends that JWB establish a continuing Committee or Commission on Camping. The Committee should include lay and professional leaders in Jewish camping."

B. "(Recommends) the need for research on various phases of camp operations ------."[1]

With these tasks in mind the JWB Camping Services in the summer of 1973, began to survey the changing registration patterns emerging from our annual reports, Camp Conferences and meetings with individual Camp Directors. It seemed clear that the summer of 1968 was the last season most camps were full and had waiting lists, although some camps experienced a downward trend in registration prior to this year. The survey of 1973 indicated that a number of resident camps had vacant beds but the downward spiral in registration seemed to be diminishing.

In 1974, reports from twenty-five (25) Jewish Community Center camps on the number of camper days, indicated that two (2) remained the same as the summer of 1973, twelve (12) showed small to medium increases and eleven (11) showed small decreases. It should also be noted that one Jewish Community Center camp closed at the end of the 1974 season.

Many hypotheses were advanced for this situation including the changing economy, changing patterns of leisure time use by Jewish families, lower fees for overseas trips, lower birthrate reaching the camp age level and others. The participants at the Annual National Conference on Jewish Camping and the JWB National Camping Committee, in trying to deal with these factors as they affect resident camp registration, recommended the Camping Services try to find some clues to what was really happening. This led to discussion between the Camping Services and the JWB Program Development and Research Services about how we could seek out some information that might be helpful to Resident Camp Directors as they plan for the future.

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1. "Report of the Commission on Jewish Camping" April 3, 1972, Document No. 72-410-6.

The cooperative efforts between the two JWB Services and the cooperation of a group of concerned Camp Directors resulted in this presentation. We hope that those who read this study recognize that the findings are only clues found in those Jewish communities participating in the project. As Camps, Jewish Community Centers, and Federations explore the meaning of these findings, it is important that they be tested locally by each community and adapted to local conditions.

The format used in presenting this study provides the essential highlights of the study findings at the beginning. The implications suggested by these findings are presented at the end of the report. We hope you find this format helpful.

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A special thanks is due to Lawrence E. Marks, Alice Falkenstein, and Joanne Hansen for their assistance in tabulating and analyzing the data collected.

S. M. A.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

1. Families may be sending their children to resident camps for shorter periods of time during the summer and for a lesser number of total years.

2. Families with children attending resident camps in 1973 most frequently cite personal and social development of the child as the most important reasons for selecting this type of camp experience.

3. Only a small minority of these parents view the enhancement of Jewish heritage, Jewish identification, and Jewish education as a primary reason for sending their children to resident camp.

4. Children are attending resident camps for much shorter registration periods than children attending day camps.

5. Children are attending resident camps for a fewer number of total years than children attending day camps.

6. Families not sending their children to resident camps most frequently said they did not do so because the children were too young or too immature for such an experience.

7. Families with children previously attending resident camps most frequently cited their children as not wanting to go to camp or being too old as the reasons for not sending them to camp again in 1973.

8. Children not attending any camp program in 1973 spent their summer working, staying at home or visiting relatives.

9. No significant relationship was found between a family's use of resident camp services and the extent to which they vacationed together.

10. Families most frequently spent their leisure time traveling in the United States, visiting friends or relatives, staying at a resort hotel or staying at home.

11. Family membership in communal organizations or facilities was not significantly related to their use of resident camp programs.

12. Families with membership in a synagogue or temple were much more likely to have children attending resident camp in 1973 than families without such membership.

13. Costs are not cited as a primary reason in deciding to send children to resident camp by the overwhelming majority of families.

14. Family mobility is not a factor influencing the families' use of resident camp programs.

15. Declines experienced in the registration of children for resident camps may well be related to the declining birth rate.

Background

During the past several years, a large number of resident camps under Jewish Community Center and communal auspices have been experiencing a noticeable decline in the number of families registering their children for camp. The JWB Yearbook of 1973 pinpoints the period 1968-1972 as the particular time when enrollments dropped. In some cases, this decline was so severe that camps affected had to terminate or consolidate their operation.[1] In other cases they were faced with the necessity of extending the registration period for camp enrollment in the hopes that additional campers could be found for the camp season. Further aggravating the situation, many camps also had to expand the geographical boundaries within which they recruited potential campers. Thus, as the demand for resident camping decreased, many camps found it necessary to explore every possible way of increasing their potential pool or supply of campers.[2]

Although "the trend seemed to come to an end in 1972, when camps reported no further decline in registration,"[3] more recent insights suggest that only a temporary plateau was reached. Since then, camps have again experienced a declining camper enrollment.

This experience of the 1960's and early 1970's is in sharp contrast to the earlier period of 1950's through most of the 1960's when demand for resident camping was very high. During this earlier period, many camps expanded their capacity as quickly as additional space and resources became available. When the demand shifted, however, many found themselves with an increasingly large number of unfilled beds. Combined with sharply increased operating costs, the inevitable crunch occurred. Camp surpluses became camp deficits. There were exceptions to this reality, of course. Certain camps continued to generate a demand for their services in excess of their capacity. Some expanded their operation during this same period of time. It is the writer's understanding, however, that these camps tended to be in the minority.

Thus, as camps were faced with a growing concern, camp directors and their boards of directors became involved in sharply evaluating all aspects of camp life. They began to ask some important questions. Facilities, program, and fees became a focal point for attention. Would the upgrading of facilities or changes in program serve to increase the demand for resident camping? Would fee increases result in fewer families registering their children for camp or were camp fees already seen as being too high for family budgets? Was the decline related to shifting patterns in the way families utilized their leisure time? These were some of the questions to which answers were needed.

In the Fall of 1973, a number of camp directors working with JWB's Director of Camping Services suggested that JWB undertake a study that would address these questions. Conducted by JWB's Program Development and Research Services, and Camping Services, a survey was instituted to explore the impact of Jewish family leisure time patterns on resident camp utilization.

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1. Emanuel Berlatsky, "An Analysis of Trends in Jewish Community Centers: 1971-73," JWB Yearbook, Vol. XXII, 1973, P. 21

2. This situation was not unique to resident camps under Jewish auspices. Other non-profit camps, and for that matter, many private camps also underwent similar experiences.

3. Berlatsky, Op. cit., P. 21.

Sample

From a potential population of 67 resident camps under Jewish Community Center or communal auspices, a stratified sample of 20 camps was selected for the survey. Camps were chosen based on their geographical location and the relative size of their camp operation. Each camp thus selected was asked to conduct 30 telephone interviews in their local community. Ten interviews were to be with parents of children still attending the camp; ten interviews with parents of children who attended the camp previously but did not return for the summer of 1973; and ten interviews with parents of children who never attended the camp.

The camps participating in the study were asked to develop a list of families for each of the three categories specified, selecting every third family for a telephone interview.

This procedure was developed to provide a sample representative of the broader universe of camps, and the families interviewed reflected three groups of primary concern. For most of the camps, identifying families in the first two categories represented a fairly straightforward procedure. To identify families in the third category, however, was a more difficult task. In order to successfully accomplish this task, camps were asked to consult with their local Jewish Community Center or Jewish Federation for the names of families residing in the community.

Of the twenty camps who agreed to participate in the study, responses were received from sixteen camps and interviews were completed with 275 families. No responses were received from camps in the sample located in Canada, or in the Western region of the United States. In addition, only a few responses were received from the Southern region of the United States. As a result, although the original sample selection provided for geographical representation, the actual responses indicate that the reader should use caution in making any generalizations from the findings to their own communities and to the United States and Canada as a whole.

One final comment about the sample is necessary. As one camp director[4] pointed out, since the telephone interviews most probably took place during camp office hours which were likely to be between 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., families where both parents were working or single parent families where the one parent was working would not have been included in the interviews. Thus, the sample is possibly over-representative of the more traditional intact family where only one parent works and under-representative of intact families with two working parents or single parent families.

The Parent Interview

An interview schedule covering each of the areas of concern to the survey was developed and reviewed by a selective number of camp directors and members of the JWB professional staff. Based upon the concerns and comments expressed by this group, the preliminary interview schedule was refined and subjected to pre-testing by the camp directors of the Wel-Met Camps located in New York City.

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4. Based on the interview experiences of Steve Turner, Assistant Director, Surprise Lake Camps, New York City.

The Wel-Met Camps carried out the pre-test of the interview schedule with 20 families (including families from each of the sample groups to be considered). The information gained from these interviews was incorporated into a final interview form (see Appendix B), and the interviews which would take approximately twenty minutes apiece were begun by the camps selected for the sample.

The Campers Attending Resident Camps

As has been noted previously, a total of 275 families participated in the present survey and included in these families were 657 children. Most of these families (73%) had 2 or 3 children living at home with relatively fewer having only one child (17%) or four or more (10%) children at home.

The predominant ages of the children varied according to their birth order, as would be expected. The oldest of each family were generally between the ages of 14-16 years (33%) or 11-13 years (33%), the rest ranging down to 8 years of age. The second oldest children were generally 11-13 years (33%) or 8-10 years (26%) with a fair number (16%) below 8 years of age and relatively few above 14 years of age. In families with more than two children (third, fourth, and fifth born), the youngest were generally under 10 years of age. Each age group was about equally divided into males and females.

Of the families interviewed whose children attended resident camp during the summer of 1973, a majority (51%) attended camps sponsored by Jewish Community Centers or YM-YWHAs. Twenty-seven per cent attended camps sponsored by other Jewish communal organizations such as Federations, Zionist groups or synagogues. Less than one-fourth attended camps sponsored by non-sectarian social work agencies (6%) or private camps (16%). Because of the particular population of interest specified for the study, such a distribution was anticipated, i.e., it was expected that the sample would be biased in the direction of families using camps under Jewish Community Center or other Jewish communal auspices.

About one-half of these children attended camps for one-three week periods. The remainder were equally divided into groups staying at camp for four weeks, six weeks or seven-nine weeks. In addition, a substantial majority of these children (68%) had also attended resident camps in previous years. For most, however (57%), they had attended resident camps for two years or less.

Thus, a pattern emerges which suggests that families may be sending their children to resident camps for shorter periods of time during the summer and for a lesser number of total years. Whether this pattern is a relatively new one can only be answered by the experiences of camp directors with camp registration during the past five years. Reflecting back on my own years of experience in full-time resident camping during the 1950's and 60's, I recall large numbers of campers returning year after year--for four, five or six years-- finally graduating to special teen age camping programs that were usually oversubscribed.

If the pattern observed in this study is a relatively new one, however, the potential consequences are of great import. Camps will be required to spend an increasingly larger proportion of their time, energy, and resources in generating a broad enough pool of potential campers to fill camper vacancies. To further exacerbate this situation, the present economic situation may force families to forego or delay registering their children for camp.

Reasons For Sending Children To Resident Camp

The families whose children attended resident camp during the summer of 1973 were asked to rank in order of importance their reasons for selecting this type of summer experience for their children. A total of 31 different responses were given, of which only those of greatest frequency are listed. The most important reasons given were the following:

1. personal development of the child such as increased independence and self-discipline (16%);
2. social development of the child such as making friends and living with peers (13%);
3. program activities (11%);
4. living in a country environment (8%);
5. having fun (7%);
6. friends also attending resident camp (5%);
7. working parents (3%);
8. educational purposes (3%);
9. enhancement of Jewish heritage, Jewish identification, and Jewish education (3%);
10. being with other Jewish children (3%);
11. getting away from siblings (3%);
12. other (25%) -- percentage distributions of the twenty remaining responses were not large enough to warrant specification.

It seems that parents tend to view the resident camp experience as one which can play an important role in the personal and social development of their children. The separation of the child from home to what can generally be assumed to be a supportive group living environment, the opportunities for independence, and the opportunities for making new friends are seen as important attributes of the resident camp. In addition, the opportunities for children to be exposed to a wide range of program activities and to a country environment are also seen as important considerations.

That only a small minority of these parents (3%) viewed the enhancement of Jewish heritage, Jewish identification, and Jewish education as a primary reason for sending their children to camp may seem somewhat surprising. Yet, parents emphasizing such an experience for their children might be more likely to seek out the specialized camp programs sponsored by synagogues or other Jewish communal agencies. In those instances where Center camps have developed strong Jewish components in their camp programs, the camps may not have sufficiently communicated this emphasis to families in the community. Another possibility is that families may view a Jewish component in the form of Jewish atmosphere, Jewish staff and campers as desirable but not necessarily as their primary consideration in selecting a resident camp. The study data would indicate that self-development is the primary goal. Thus, families may feel that their childrens' Jewish education and identity needs are satisfied during the year via Hebrew school, temples and synagogues, etc., and the summer represents an appropriate break from these involvements.

The Campers Attending Day Camp

Approximately 22% or 141 of the children examined in this study attended day camp during the summer of 1973. Of this number, a majority (51%) attended camps sponsored by Jewish Community Centers and YM-YWHAs, again expected. An additional 27% attended camps under private auspices; 13% attended municipal playground recreation programs; 5% attended other social work agency programs; and 4% attended day camps sponsored by synagogues or other Jewish organizations.

Children attending day camps exhibit very different registration patterns than those attending resident camps. As Table I indicates

TABLE I

Type of Camp

		Resident	Day
Registration Pattern	3 weeks or less	96 (45%)	18 (13%)
	4 weeks	43 (20%)	35 (25%)
	6 weeks	36 (17%)	28 (20%)
	7-9 weeks	38 (18%)	57 (42%)
		213 (100%)	138 (100%)

$X^2 = 45.02$ $p<.001$

there is a significant relationship between the type of camp children attend and the length of time for which they are registered. Children attending resident camp have only a small percentage of their group enrolled for full summer programs (18%), while a much larger percentage of the day camp group (42%) registered for full summer programs (7-9 weeks). In addition, 20% of those attending day camps registered for six week programs; 25% registered for four week programs; and a relatively small percentage (13%) registered for programs lasting three weeks or less. In short, the majority of resident campers are attending camp for four weeks or less while the majority of day campers are attending camp for four weeks or more.

When the relationship is examined between the type of camp attended and the number of previous years of attending such camps, a similar pattern emerges. As Table II indicates, only a minority of children attending resident camps have previously attended such camps for two years or more, while a majority of children attending day camps have previously attended these camps for at least two years. In fact, 52% of the day campers have been attending day camps for four or more years as compared to 22% for resident campers.

One possibility that might account for this difference might be that parents register their children for day camp programs at an earlier age, e.g., under the age of eight years, thereby making it possible for the children to attend such camps for a longer number of years. Yet at the same time, although children may begin resident camp at a somewhat older age, such camps also make it possible for children to attend for many years. As a result, this possibility does not seem to sufficiently explain the pattern indicated.

TABLE II

Type of Camp

		Resident	Day
Number of Years Previously Attended	less than 2 years	83 (57%)	25 (31%)
	3 years	31 (21%)	14 (17%)
	4 years	15 (10%)	23 (29%)
	5 years	7 (5%)	10 (12%)
	6 years or more	10 (7%)	9 (11%)
		146 (100%)	81 (100%)

$X^2 = 23.08$ $p < .001$

It may be more likely that the pattern noted earlier, that families may be sending their children to resident camps for shorter periods of time during the summer and for a lesser number of total years, may be related to the relative costs of camping. For a somewhat comparable expenditure of dollars, families are able to register their children for day camp programs lasting as much as twice as long as resident camp experiences. Thus, where families are concerned with providing their children with structured camping experiences lasting most or all of the summer, day camp may be the program of choice. This would be a major consideration for single parent families where the parent with child custody is working.

Reasons for Sending Children to Day Camp

Families with children attending day camp programs during the summer of 1973 were also asked to rank in order of importance their reasons for selecting these programs. A total of 33 different responses were given. Those reasons which occurred with the greatest frequency are provided below:

1. to give the child something to do (22%);
2. social development of the child (20%);
3. relief to parents (7%);
4. opportunity for the child to enjoy summer vacation time (6%);
5. personal development of the child (6%);
6. friends attending day camp (5%);
7. a good experience for the child (4%);
8. provide supervised activity--keep child off the streets (4%);
9. parents working (3%);
10. child not yet ready for resident camp experience (3%);
11. opportunity to be with other Jewish children (3%);
12. other (17%)

As with resident camp, families view program activities and the social development of their children as primary reasons for selecting day camp. Personal development of the child is much less frequently cited by those parents as a reason for selecting a day experience for their children.

Reasons for Not Sending Children to Resident Camp

Families with children attending day camps were asked to indicate their reasons for selecting a day camp program instead of a resident camp program. The overwhelming response was that their children were too young or immature for such an experience (50%). For many families (12%) the cost of resident camp was too high, i.e., they felt they could not afford it. Other reasons given (10%) was that the children did not want to go to "sleep-away camp" or their friends were attending day camp (6%). These responses were somewhat surprising because it was felt that cost or the leisure time pattern of families would be given as the most important reasons. That they were not, raises some interesting questions for discussion.

Children Not Attending Camp Programs

Of the 320 children who did not attend camp during the summer of 1973, approximately one-half (54%) indicated that they had previously attended resident camp. Of this group, 34% had attended for only one previous summer but almost half (44%) had attended for 2-3 summers, and 22% had attended for four or more summers.

Parents of these children were asked to indicate why they did not send their children back to resident camp. The most frequently cited reason was that the child did not want to go to camp (25%). This was especially true for the oldest children in each family, suggesting that many of the children felt they had outgrown camp. This is also supported by the fact that the second most commonly expressed reason cited by parents was that their children were too old (20%). Other reasons mentioned were the following: child was too young (10%); cost of camp (12%); family had other vacation plans (8%); and child's friends not at camp (7%).

About one-half of the children who did not attend any camp program during the summer of 1973 had previously attended day camp--most having gone for two or three summers. When the parents of these children were asked their reasons for not sending their children back to day camp, they too cited the most important reason being that their children were too old (30%). Other reasons given were: children did not want to go (especially true for the older children in each family, 18%); cost of camp (14%); and the family had other vacation plans (11%).

Finally, the parents of the children who did not go to camp last summer were asked how their children had actually spent their summer in 1973. Among the older children, about 20% worked and most of the rest either stayed at home, visited relatives or spent their time at the beach. Only 8% of the older children indicated that they went to summer school. Among the younger children, there was a sharp drop in the number who either worked or went to summer school as might be expected. There was also a concomitant increase in the percentage of children staying home, going to the beach, visiting relatives and vacationing with the family.

Family Leisure Time Patterns

One of the major questions to which this study was addressed was whether the changing pattern of registration for resident camps was related to change in the leisure time patterns of families. In order to examine this relationship, five categories of the relative use of resident camp services by families was specified. These categories are listed below:

1. Families who had at least one child going to resident camp in 1973.
2. Families who had at least one child going to day camp but no children going to resident camp in 1973.
3. Families who had no children going to either day or resident camp in 1973 but who had at least one child who had previously gone to resident camp.
4. Families whose children had never gone to resident camp but had attended day camp prior to, but not during 1973.
5. Families whose children had never attended camp.

Vacation Patterns

In general, there was no significant relationship between a family's use of resident camp services and the extent to which they vacationed together. The overwhelming majority of families were characterized by great similarity in their leisure time patterns. Most families took only one vacation a year (70%), and these vacations averaged one to two weeks in duration (90%). The largest percentage of families (32%) spent their vacations traveling in the United States with an additional 27% visiting friends or relatives; 12% staying at home; 11% staying at a resort hotel; 8% camping, and 5% renting a summer home.

When actual family vacation patterns were examined for the year 1972, the year prior to the study, a distinct relationship was found between a family's vacationing together and its use of camping service. As the level of camp use decreased, the likelihood of the family vacationing together increased. This finding though significant, does not necessarily suggest that families failed to register their children for camp programs because they decided to vacation as a family unit. Rather, it is more likely that when children spend their summer vacation at home, they are included in any vacation plan made by the family. Further, since the typical vacation is only of a relatively short duration, parents still have to make some decision about how their children will spend the major portion of their summer vacation period.

The kinds of vacations actually taken by families in 1972 was very similar to the general pattern suggested earlier. The largest percentage of families (35%) spent their vacation traveling in the United States, with an additional 16% visiting friends or relatives; 12% staying at a resort hotel; 11% staying at home, etc.

Summer Activities

Approximately one-half of all families questioned indicated that during the summer months they had a family membership in no recreation program or facility other than the local Jewish Community Center. When families did belong to other programs, they tended to choose swim and golf clubs or utilized community beaches. Family membership in two or more recreation programs or facilities was not significantly related to the use of resident camp programs. Whether a family belonged to the local Jewish Community Center, country club, swim or tennis club, etc., alone or in combination, did not appear to influence their decision to send their children to resident camp.

Membership in Synagogues, Temples, and Jewish Communal Organizations

Families with membership in a synagogue or temple were much more likely to have their children attending resident camp in 1973 (72%) than those families without such membership (28%). This pattern also holds for families who are members of other Jewish communal organizations such as B'nai Brith, Hadassah, ORT, etc. Of those families with children attending resident camp in 1973, 63% were members of such organizations, while 37% were not members. Thus, it is possible that families with membership in their local synagogue or temple, or those active in other Jewish communal organizations may provide resident camps with a continuing and expanded resource for recruiting campers.

Costs, Family Leisure Time Patterns, and Resident Camp Uses

The types of vacations taken by families seems to suggest the possibility that a large number are selecting the less expensive vacation options. 47% of the families spent their vacation periods visiting friends or relatives, staying at home, or camping. It may be that such choices are related to cost factors, i.e., families feel less able or are less willing to become involved in more costly vacations. It may also be that families are selecting these less expensive options because they are viewed as being more desirable. If, however, one speculates that costs are a factor for many families, then it would be reasonable to expect that these families might consider cost as an important factor in reaching their decision about resident camp. Yet, when parents were asked to rank their reasons in order of importance for not sending their children to resident camp, cost was not suggested as a major factor by the overwhelming majority. As noted earlier, 12% of the families with children attending day camp, and 12% of the families without any children in camping programs cited this reason. What then might account for this difference? It is the investigator's feeling that two possibilities have to be considered in particular.

First, the families interviewed for this survey can be characterized as being of a relatively high socio-economic status. Educationally, 73% of the parents had either attended or graduated from college with 25% of them having obtained graduate school degrees. Obly 4% of the parents had not completed a high school education.

Economically, 61% of the families reported an annual income above $15,000. Of this total, 41% had an income above $20,000 per year and almost one fourth (23%) had incomes higher than $30,000 per year.

Obviously, for such a group, the cost of sending a child to camp might be a relevant consideration, but secondary to the more important factors cited previously, i.e. personal and social development, program, etc.

A second possibility is that when the data for this study had been collected, the impact of the present economic situation had not yet begun to affect families. It might therefore be reasonable to assume that the cost of resident camp would be considered as a more important factor than previously. Only with time and the experiences of camps in the next year or two can the impact be more fully assessed. At a minimum, camps will need to collect data which will permit such an evaluation.

Family Mobility

The mobility of families was considered as another possible factor that might be influencing the use of resident camps. It was assumed that families moving frequently to new communities and to new states would possibly be characterized by transitional attitudes and a lack of roots in their communities. This might mean less awareness of and less investment in community programs and services, and therefore less use of resident camp programs.

The data collected on mobility by the National Jewish Population Study indicates that except for the youngest (20-24) and oldest (over 65) age groups, an essentially inverse proportion exists between the length of current residence in the same city and age. As the age of individuals increases, the likehood for their moving from their present residence decreases. For example, 42% of the individuals in the age group 30-34 are still living in the same city as they were in 1965 as compared to 49% for the age group 35-39, 63% for the age group 40-44, 67% for the age group 45-49 and 50-54.[5]

Most of the parents in the study sample were in the age groups 30-39, and 40-49. Of the husbands, 50% were 40-49 years of age with an additional 35% being 30-39 years of age. The wives were younger, with 55% being 30-39 years of age and 34% being 40-49 years of age.

In general, families appear to have more stable residential and community living patterns than would be expected from the data reported by the National Jewish Population Study. A substantial majority of families (74%) have resided at their present address for five years or more with 7% of the families living at their present residence less than two years and 6% living at their present residence less than one year. 71% of all the families own their own home. In addition, 87% of the families have lived in the same community for five years or more with only 3% residing in the community less than one year.

Such a pattern would suggest that mobility would not be likely to play a major role in influencing families' decisions to send their children to resident camp. At the same time, the fact that 13% of the families have been in their present residence for two years or less might suggest that there are a number of families who may be unaware of the resident camp programs. These families, once pinpointed, could represent an important target group to be reached by the Jewish Community Center and other Jewish communal camps in the community.

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5. "Mobility: Facts for Planning," National Jewish Population Study (New York: Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds, 1974), pp. 1-6.

Birth Rate and the Jewish Population

Finally, it was assumed that an overall decline in the use of resident camps by families might be related to a declining birth rate. An examination of United States Census data provides some support for this notion. High levels in the birth rate took place in the last half of the 1950's with new all-time lows being posted in 1972 and 1973; the trend seems to be continuing in 1974.[6]

Examined on the basis of age, children under the age of 5 years made up 10.8% of the population in 1950, 11.3% of the population in 1960 and 8.3% of the population in 1970. Children between the ages of 5-9 years made up 8.8% of the population in 1950, 10.4% of the population in 1960, and 9.7% of the population in 1970.[7] Since these age groups make up the primary group of prospective future campers, the decline in their numbers might account in part for the decline in resident camp registration.

This concern assumes a dimension of even greater magnitude when the data is examined solely for the Jewish population. Focusing only on the age groups, 0-4 years, 5-9 years, and 10-14 years, which represent those children in the primary prospective or actual camper groups, the decline manifested is even sharper. In 1955 there were approximately 238 children per 1000 of the total Jewish population between the ages of 0-14 years. This figure increased to a high of 282 per 1000 in 1960. In 1965 the figure decreased to 262 per 1000 and in 1970 it reached a low of 225 per 1000. Projecting ahead to 1975, it is very probable that the decline will reach 181 per 1000.[8]

Although the declining registration experienced by resident camps in general mirrors the declining birth rate of the Jewish and broader population, it is possible that this declining registration was related to changing attitudes or some other factors. But whatever the cause, it is reasonable to assume that the pattern has been accentuated by the declining birth rate. Followed to its logical conclusion, if the birth rate continues to decline significantly, or even level off in the future, there will be fewer children who are of or approaching camp age, and it is very likely that this situation will be accompanied by a concomitant increase in competition among resident camps, day camps, and non-camp programs for children.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Resident camps are facing a clearly established declining birth rate and must more actively consider ways of consolidating their operations, or in some cases, merging with other camps where registration has also dropped significantly.

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6. "Population Characteristics: Prospects for American Fertility – June 1974," Current Population Reports (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1974), p. 2.

7. Statistical Abstract of the United States 1972, (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, July 1972), pp. 8-10.

8. Based on data collected by the National Jewish Population Study and provided by Alvin Chenkin, Director of Statistical Services, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, January 1975.

The figures cited do not include the number of deaths or the extent of in migration and out migration. Although this might affect the figures somewhat, it is presumed to be minimal with this age group.

2. Since families most frequently rank the personal and social development of the child as the most important attribute of the resident camp, camps need to maximize this factor in the literature and in their communications with the broader community, i.e., camps should point up their potential role in providing opportunities for children to develop greater self-discipline, greater independence, and opportunities to relate more effectively to their peers in a supportive environment away from home.

3. Since families are sending their children to resident camps for shorter registration periods and for shorter number of years, camps may need to explore new ways of reaching out to the community. For example, resident camps and day camps might develop joint camping packages for families providing both kinds of experiences for children. Some camps have already begun such a process.

4. Camps emphasizing the Jewish component as one of their primary programs and services need to communicate the meaning of this component in camp life more effectively to families.

5. Many children do not return to camp because they outgrow the experience. Camps may be able to hold this age group if they expand or develop programs which both children and parents view as highly desirable. Recent conversations with some camp directors suggest that even some of previously highly desired teen programs are having registration problems. Perhaps, costs which are often higher for such programs are emerging as a more significant factor than previously.

6. Many families are selecting less expensive vacation options for themselves. Perhaps, camps can build on this phenomenon by using part or all of their facilities differently. It may be that the cycle has come the full turn and the time has once again come for the expansion of family camping programs. Such programs would meet the potential needs of families seeking the less expensive vacations as well as those concerned with costs.

7. Although only a small minority of families cited costs as a major reason for not using resident camps, this group may grow in size if the present economic situation continues. Camps need to consider providing families with a greater array of options for paying for the cost of camp. Extended payments for fees as is now being done in many Jewish Community Centers represents one such possibility.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO CAMP DIRECTORS

NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD

15 East 26th Street • New York, N.Y. 10010 • Tel: (212) 532-4949 • Cable Jewelbo, New York

September 10, 1973

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I am pleased to advise you the JWB Camping Service is conducting a study of the leisure time patterns of Jewish families and their impact on resident camp services. This subject has been of considerable concern to Center Executive Directors and Camp Directors and we plan to present the findings at the Annual Camp Directors Conference in early January.

To gather the necessary data we are asking a selected group of Camp Directors to arrange for conducting 30 telephone interviews in their local communities. The sample will be divided into three categories of 10 interviews in each of the following population groups:

A. Parents of children who attended camp this summer.

B. Parents of campers who attended camp last summer or the summer before, and still eligible, but did not use the resident camping service this summer.

C. Parents who never used the summer agency resident camp service for their children who are still eligible.

The questionnaires, now being tested, will include specific instructions to help determine which families will be interviewed and how you should have the interviews conducted. We expect the interviews to start on October 1st, and be completed by November 10th and returned to us. This will give us the necessary time to analyze the data and prepare a report in time for the January Camp Directors Conference.

Since our timetable for the study is very tight we need to know immediately if your camp will participate with us in this important project. I hope you will return the enclosed postcard to me as quickly as possible so we can proceed with the study. If you have any further questions please let me know.

I look forward to your joining us in the study.

Sincerely,

ALFRED DOBROF
Director
Camping Services

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTERS AND YM-YWHAs • MEMBER, UNITED SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC. (U S O)

APPENDIX B

CAMPING QUESTIONNAIRE

October 1973

NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD
15 East 26th Street New York, N.Y. 10010

JWB CAMPING SURVEY

I. INTRODUCTION:

Hello:

My name is_____. I am calling on behalf of_____.
(name of staff person) (name of camp)
We are presently undertaking a survey of how families plan for their Children's and total family summer vacation needs. We are conducting this study to improve services to families in the community.

With your permission, I would like to ask you some questions. I will only take 10 to 20 minutes of your time.

*(INTERVIEWER: Do not include children attending college out-of-town. Include all children at home. Check only one response.)

1A. How many children in your family are now living at home?

___(a) none
___(b) one
___(c) two
___(d) three
___(e) four
___(f) five or more

*(INTERVIEWER: Begin with the oldest child living at home and continue down to the youngest child at home giving their sex and age. Say, "Could you give us the sex and age of each of your children living at home beginning with your oldest child.")

2A. CHILD #1: (oldest child at home)

SEX:
___(a) male
___(b) female

AGE:
___(a) under 8 years
___(b) 8-10 years
___(c) 11-13 years
___(d) 14-16 years
___(e) 17 years or older

2B. CHILD #2:

SEX:
___(a) male
___(b) female

AGE:
___(a) under 8 years
___(b) 8-10 years
___(c) 11-13 years
___(d) 14-16 years
___(e) 17 years or older

2C. CHILD #3:

SEX:
___(a) male
___(b) female

AGE:
___(a) under 8 years
___(b) 8-10 years
___(c) 11-13 years
___(d) 14-16 years
___(e) 17 years or older

2D.CHILD #4:

SEX:
___(a) male
___(b) female

AGE:
___(a) under 8 years
___(b) 8-10 years
___(c) 11-13 years
___(d) 14-16 years
___(3) 17 years or older

2E. CHILD #5: (youngest child at home)

SEX:
___(a) male
___(b) female

AGE:
___(a) under 8 years
___(b) 8-10 years
___(c) 11-13 years
___(d) 14-16 years
___(e) 17 years or older

3. Did <u>any</u> of these children attend a camp program this past summer?

___(a) yes; # of child(ren) _____
___(b) no; # of child(ren) _____

*(INTERVIEWER: Questions 4-12 beginning on page 3 are to be asked of parents whose children <u>did attend</u> a camp program this past summer. If the children did <u>not</u> attend a camp program this past summer, skip to questions 13-17 in section III, beginning on page 5 . If some children living at home attended camp and some did not, <u>both</u> sections are to be completed.)

II. CHILDREN ATTENDING A CAMP PROGRAM IN THE SUMMER OF 1973:

*(INTERVIEWER: Check all that apply and refer back to question 2A-2E for # of child.)

4. This past summer, which of your children attended:

___(a) sleep-away camp; Child # or #'s_____
___(b) day camp; Child # or #'s _____

*(INTERVIEWER: Skip to question 9 if children did not attend a sleep-away camp this past summer.)

SLEEP-AWAY CAMP:

5. Who sponsored the SLEEP-AWAY camp(s):

___(a) Jewish Community Center or YM-YWHA
___(b) Synagogue
___(c) Zionist organization
___(d) other Jewish organizations; specify: _____
___(e) Scouts
___(f) other social agency; specify: _____
___(g) private camp

6. How long did the child(ren) attend the SLEEP-AWAY CAMP?

___(a) 1-3 weeks; child # or #'s _____
___(b) 4 weeks; child # or #'s _____
___(c) 6 weeks; child # or #'s _____
___(d) 7-9 weeks; child # or #'s _____

7A. Did this child (or children) attend SLEEP-AWAY CAMP(S) in previous years?

___(a) yes child # or #'s_____
___(b) no; child # or #'s_____

7B. If yes, how many years? _____ (child #___) _____
(child #____) (# of years) (# of years)

*(INTERVIEWER: Probe and rank answers in order of importance)

8. What were the three most important reasons for sending your child(ren) to SLEEP-AWAY camp?

(a)_____

(b)_____

(c)_____

*(INTERVIEWER: Skip to question 13A on page 5 if children did not attend a day camp this past summer.)

DAY CAMP:

9. Who sponsored the DAY CAMP program?

___(a) Jewish Community Center or YM-YWHA
___(b) Synagogue
___(c) Zionist organization
___(d) other Jewish organizations; specify: _____
___(e) Scouts
___(f) other social agency; specify:_____
___(g) Municipal playground recreation program
___(h) private camp

10. How long did the child(ren) attend the DAY CAMP program?

___(a) 1-3 weeks; child # or #'s _____
___(b) 4 weeks; child # or #'s _____
___(c) 6 weeks; child # or #'s _____
___(d) 7-9 weekd; child # or #'s _____

11A. Did this child (or children) attend DAY CAMP(s) in previous years?

___(a) yes; child # or #'s _____
___(b) no; child # or #'s _____

11B. If yes, how many years? _____ (Child#_____); _____
(# of years) (# of years)
(Child #_____)

*(INTERVIEWER: Probe and rank answers in order of importance.)

12. What were the three most important reasons for sending your child(ren) to DAY CAMP?

(a)_____

(b)_____

(c)_____

*(INTERVIEWER: If reasons for sending child(ren) to day camp are similar to needs that can be met by your sleep-away camp, ask the following question.)

12B. What made you choose a day camp for your child rather than a sleep-away camp?

_____

_____

_____

III. CHILDREN NOT ATTENDING A CAMP PROGRAM IN THE SUMMER OF 1973

*(INTERVIEWER: Check all that apply and refer back to question 2A-2E for # of child.)

13A. Have these child(ren) previously attended SLEEP-AWAY camp?

___(a) yes; Child # or #'s _____
___(b) no ; Child # or #'s _____

*(INTERVIEWER: If respondent answers only (b) "no", then skip to question 15.)

13B. If yes, how many summers did your child(ren) attend SLEEP-AWAY camp?

___(a) one summer.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(b) two summers.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(c) three summers.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(d) four summers.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(e) five or more summers....;Child # or #'s_____

*(INTERVIEWER: PROBE and check all that apply. Also rank the three most important.)

14A. Which of the following served as an important consideration in your decision not to send your child(ren) to SLEEP-AWAY camp this year?

___(a) program.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(b) facilities.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(c) staff.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(d) cost.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(e) child's friends not at camp.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(f) child too old for camp.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(g) child too young for camp.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(h) child did not want to go to camp.;Child # or #'s_____
___(i) other family vacation plans.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(j) other (specify child # and reason:

Child #:____ Reason:_____

Child #:____ Reason:_____

Child #:____ Reason:_____

*(INTERVIEWER: Probe!)

14C. In what ways were the above considerations important? How do you presently deal with these considerations for your family?

(a)_____

(b)_____

(c)_____

*(INTERVIEWER: Check all that apply and refer back to 2A-2E for # of child.)

15A. Have these children previously attended DAY CAMP?

___(a) yes; Child # or #'s _____

___(b) no ; Child # or #'s _____

*(INTERVIEWER: If respondent answers only (b) "no", then skip to question 17.)

15B. If yes, how many summers did your child(ren) attend DAY CAMP?

___(a) one summer.....; Child # or #'s _____
___(b) two summers.....; Child # or #'s_____
___(c) three summers....; Child # or #'s_____
___(d) four summers.....; Child # or #'s_____
___(e) five or more summers Child # or #'s_____

*(INTERVIEWER: PROBE and check all that apply. Also rank the three most important.)

16A. Which of the following served as an important consideration in your decision not to send your child(ren) to DAY CAMP this year?

___(a) program.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(b) facilities.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(c) staff.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(d) cost.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(e) child's friends not at camp.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(f) child too old for camp.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(g) child too young for camp.....;Child # or #'s_____
___(h) child did not want to go to camp;Child # or #'s_____
___(i) other family vacation plans
___(j) other (specify child # and reason:
Child #:_____ Reason:_____

Child #:_____ Reason:_____

Child #:_____ Reason:_____

*(INTERVIEWER: Probe!)

168. Why are the above considerations important? How do you presently deal with these considerations for your family?

_____

_____

_____

*(INTERVIEWER: Probe for each child not attending camp in 1973. Specify child's #.)

17. How did your child(ren) use their summer?

Child #: _____

Child #: _____

Child #: _____

Child #: _____

Child #: _____

IV. FAMILY VACATION PATTERNS:

*(INTERVIEWER: Now say, "I would now like to ask you some questions about your family vacations.")

18A. Does your family generally vacation together?

___(a) yes
___(b) no

*(INTERVIEWER: If (b) "no", skip to question 20A.)

18B. If yes, is this vacation:

___(a) once a year
___(b) twice a year
___(c) more than twice a year

*(INTERVIEWER: If (b) or (c) are checked meaning the family vacations together more than once a year, put "1st", "2nd", "3rd", etc., next to the appropriate answer.

18C. If yes, how long is each vacation?

___(a) less than one week
___(b) one week
___(c) two weeks
___(d) three weeks
___(e) four weeks
___(f) five weeks or more

*(INTERVIEWER: Check all that apply.)

18D. What do you and your family usually do together on vacation?

___(a) stay at home
___(b) visit friends or relatives
___(c) go camping
___(d) travel in the United States
___(e) travel abroad
___(f) stay at a resort hotel
___(g) rent a summer cottage/home
___(h) other (specify:_____)

19. For how many of these vacations do your children generally join you:

___(a) none
___(b) one
___(c) two
___(d) three or more

20A. Did your family vacation together last year?

___(a) yes
___(b) no

*(INTERVIEWER: If (b) "no", skip to question 21A.)

*(INTERVIEWER: Check all that apply.)

20B. What did you and your family do together on vacation last year?

___(a) stay at home
___(b) visit friends or relatives
___(c) go camping
___(d) travel in the United States
___(e) travel abroad
___(f) stay at a resort hotel
___(g) rent a summer cottage/home
___(h) other (specify:_____)

*(INTERVIEWER: Check all that apply.)

21A. During the summer does your family have membership in the following:

___(a) swim club
___(b) tennis club
___(c) golf club
___(d) combination country club
___(e) community recreation park
___(f) community beach
___(g) other recreational program (specify:_____)
___(h) none

*(INTERVIEWER: If (h) "none", skip to question 22 in Section V, FAMILY INFORMATION, on page 10.

21B. Which of the above activities does each member of your family participate in most actively?

HUSBAND:_____

WIFE:_____

CHILD #1:_____

CHILD #2:_____

CHILD #3:_____

CHILD #4:_____

CHILD #5:_____

V. FAMILY INFORMATION:

*(INTERVIEWER: Say, "Now, just a few more questions.")

22. Which of the following groups includes you and your spouses age:

A. HUSBAND:	B. WIFE:
___(a) under 30 years	___(a) under 30 years
___(b) 30-39 years	___(b) 30-39 years
___(c) 40-49 years	___(c) 40-49 years
___(d) 50-59 years	___(d) 50-59 years
___(e) 60 years & over	___(e) 60 years & over

23. What is the occupation of the principal wage earner in your family?

(Specify:_____)

24. What is the highest level of education completed by the principal wage earner?

___(a) below high school
___(b) some high school
___(c) high school graduate
___(d) some college
___(e) college graduate
___(f) some graduate school
___(g) graduate degree

25. How long have you lived at your present residence?

___(a) less than 1 year
___(b) 1-2 years
___(c) 3-4 years
___(d) 5 years or more

26. How long have you lived in this community?

___(a) less than 1 year
___(b) 1-2 years
___(c) 3-4 years
___(d) 5 years of more

27. Do you own or rent your home:

___(a) own home
___(b) rent home

28. Do you belong to a Temple or Synagogue?

___(a) yes
___(b) no

29. Are you a member of the Jewish Community Center or YM-YWHA?

___(a) yes
___(b) no

30A. Are you or your spouse a member of other Jewish organizations?

___(a) yes
___(b) no

30B. If yes, specify which organizations:

1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____
5._____

31A. Would you mind telling me your marital status?

___(a) married, both parents at home
___(b) separated
___(c) divorced
___(d) widowed
___(e) other (spouse in hospital or in Army, specify:
_____)

*(INTERVIEWER: If (a) "married", skip to question 32. All others, answer question 31B.)

31B. How many years have you been a single parent?

___(a) less than 1 year
___(b) 1-2 years
___(c) 3-4 years
___(d) 5 years of more

32. Finally would you please tell me which of the following groups includes your total family income last year before taxes?

___(a) under $7,500
___(b) $ 7,500-$ 9,999
___(c) $10,000-$14,999
___(d) $15,000-$19,999
___(e) $20,000-$29,999
___(f) $30,000-$39,999
___(g) $40,000 or more

*(INTERVIEWER: Say, "Thank you for your cooperation."

INTERVIEWER:_____ City:_____
signature

Date:_____

73-500-R-10